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22 July 2016

Mrs Deborah Cole  
Headteacher  
Lewknor Church of England Primary School  
High Street, Lewknor  
Watlington  
Oxfordshire  
OX49 5TF

Dear Mrs Cole

### **Short inspection of Lewknor Church of England Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You inspire your staff and pupils to do their best because you are approachable and supportive. Your razor-sharp focus on improving standards is coupled with a conviction that pupils in your care receive the best support available. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about you. They describe the transformation of the school as 'remarkable' and say that the school has gone from 'strength to strength' under your leadership.

Since your appointment, you have improved all aspects of the school. Pupils' standards in all key stages have risen rapidly over the last two years. You stringently evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school and you have successfully addressed the areas that required further attention. As a result, teaching across all the key stages is now very effective with much that is excellent. You have introduced new systems to check on pupils' progress and ensure that pupils are regularly challenged to achieve well.

You work particularly closely with the Watlington partnership, a local collaboration of schools. You and your leaders have used this partnership effectively to check that your moderation and assessment of pupils' work is accurate, as well as to support staff with additional training. You are also well advised by the Oxford

diocese, which supports you when appropriate. The school has established a very effective partnership with parents through the Friends of the Lewknor School. As a result, parents are keen to raise funds and support the school in the many events that you organise.

Despite the school being a small school, you have created opportunities for teachers to lead on developing key priorities. As a result, teachers are working well with you to sustain the improvements made and address areas that require further attention. All staff are committed to and understand your vision that they are 'building the foundations for a happy and successful life'. They are keen to develop their practice and feel supported and motivated. There are good systems in place to reward teachers' performance and you use these well to challenge staff to do their best.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively.

- You have introduced a new approach to teaching mathematics, which teachers are using well. Over the last two years, pupils have improved the standards that they achieve in both key stages. Current information also shows that pupils are meeting the standards expected of them in most year groups. However, you recognise that teachers could develop their approaches to ensure that more of the most able excel in mathematics.
- Over the last two years, pupils' standards in writing have increased in both key stages. Pupils have achieved standards above the national average and many have made good or better progress compared to their peers nationally. Pupils' presentation has also improved, although you acknowledge that pupils' spelling requires further attention in order for them to exceed expected standards.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school has appropriate systems in place to keep pupils safe. The training for staff is up to date, and there are rigorous checks on all those who work or volunteer in the school. Governors regularly check this aspect of the school's work and, thus, exercise good oversight. You are resolute in ensuring that other agencies provide the right support for those children who need extra help. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe as a result of suitable activities that include e-safety talks, cycle proficiency courses and road safety assemblies. Parents say that pupils are safe and happy in school and that 'they never leave school feeling sad'.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and the governors know the school well so you have rightly identified the areas that require further attention. The school development plan is a useful document that you use regularly to check whether you are on track to reach your goals.
- Governors exercise their duties well. They work with you to identify the key

priorities and support you to find solutions to address these. For example, governors are helping you to find resources for extra staff and improving the environment of the school. Governors are suitably knowledgeable about the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and keep a close eye on the standards of all pupils at the school.

- Following your appointment, you revamped the school's assessment system. As a result, staff at all levels are much more confident about how well individual and groups of pupils are doing. You meet with your team regularly to check that pupils continue to do well.
- Pupils in 2015 achieved standards above the national average in reading in key stage 1 and in key stage 2. The most able pupils' attainment in reading and writing was also above the national average in key stage 1 and in key stage 2. Current information shows that the majority of pupils are now achieving the expected standards in reading in each class, and the most able are working at greater depth.
- You recognised that the progress of pupils in writing could be improved and you took robust steps to address this. In 2015, pupils in key stage 1 achieved well above the expected national standards. In key stage 2, the majority of pupils made similar or better rates of progress when compared to other pupils nationally. However, you have identified spelling as an area that requires further focus. You are taking the right steps to address this with a school-wide focus on improving spelling strategies so that current information shows the majority of pupils achieving the expected standards.
- In 2015, standards in mathematics were above the national average. However, fewer pupils than expected achieved the highest level. As a result, you have made good use of your partnership with local schools and further training to review your mathematics curriculum. This has led to pupils improving their knowledge and understanding of mathematical topics and concepts.
- In 2015, the number of children achieving a good level of development in the early years increased from 2014 and was well above the national average. You ensure that children get the strongest start in school. You have achieved this by recruiting the right staff and providing good facilities so that pupils are well prepared for Year 1.
- All pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics in 2014 and in 2015. Current information shows that the teaching of phonics remains very strong. You are also using the expertise of the teachers in key stage 1 adeptly to help pupils who struggle, to catch up.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well in school. In 2015, they achieved standards in line with other pupils in the school and others nationally. The few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported so that they make progress from their starting points. However, you recognise that a few of these pupils are not yet achieving the standards expected. You are working with all staff to improve the quality of support for these pupils so that they can catch up.
- Pupils want to succeed. They know when they have done well and what

additional work they need to do to improve. They take pride in their work and write neatly, following the school guidance for the use of pens, pencils and rulers consistently.

- The curriculum is dynamic and stimulating. Pupils enjoy learning and talk enthusiastically about the trips and visits that they experience. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed the ethics of taking a life and used their prior knowledge of life in World War 2 to inform their views.
- The additional funding for sports is used effectively to develop pupils' talents. For example, pupils have learnt the basics of American football and archery this year. Pupils also participate in a wide range of sports as well as weekly activities such as running or aerobics.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are keen to share their views and value the close-knit supportive atmosphere. All pupils in Year 5 act as mentors to younger children and pupils say 'everyone works together and helps out'.
- The overall attendance of pupils is currently well above the national average. A few pupils continue to attend less well, despite the support and advice that you have given them.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. They attend the school regularly and feel that any concerns are swiftly dealt with. They are very happy with the provision and, through the Friends of Lewknor School, raise money to help to improve the fabric of the school.
- Behaviour around the school is very good. Pupils listen well to each other and to adults. They follow the school's procedures well. For example, at the end of break, a Year 2 pupil rang the bell and without any prompting, all the pupils stopped and moved quietly to their classrooms.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further improve the teaching in mathematics so that more pupils, especially the most able, can develop a greater depth and mastery of the topics that they learn.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the diocese of Oxford and the director of children's services for Oxfordshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Seamus Murphy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

One inspector visited the school for one day. There were meetings with you, your leaders and governors as well as with a representative of the local authority and the diocese. Policies around safeguarding, your own analyses of pupils' achievement and other documents were scrutinised. The inspector visited all year groups to see teaching and learning. There were formal and informal meetings with pupils. The inspector looked at pupils' work in lessons and with leaders, in particular mathematics books from all classes in key stage 2. The 29 responses to Parent View were analysed and the views of parents who spoke to the inspector informally at the end of the school day were taken into account.